United Nations A/C.5/68/SR.24

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session

Official Records

Distr.: General
20 January 2014

Original: English

## Fifth Committee

**Summary record of the 24th meeting**
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 16 December 2013, at 10 a.m.

*Chair*: Mr. Taalas ..... (Finland)
*Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions*: Mr. Ruiz Massieu

## Contents

Agenda item 116: Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments (*continued*)

(f) Appointment of members of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee (*continued*)

Agenda item 133: Programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 (*continued*)

*Second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013*

Agenda item 134: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015 (*continued*)

*Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council*

*Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.55/Rev.1: Situation of human rights in Myanmar*

Agenda item 158: Financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

This record is subject to correction. Corrections should be sent as soon as possible, under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned, to the Chief of the Documents Control Unit (srcorrections@un.org), and incorporated in a copy of the record.

Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org/).

13-62189 (E)

Please recycle

*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

**Agenda item 116: Appointments to fill vacancies in subsidiary organs and other appointments** (*continued*)

**(f) Appointment of members of the Independent Audit Advisory Committee** (*continued*) (A/68/106/Add.1)

1. **The Chair** drew the Committee's attention to document A/68/106/Add.1, in which the Secretary-General referred to decision 68/412, whereby the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the Fifth Committee, had decided to appoint one member to the Independent Audit Advisory Committee and to postpone to a later date the appointment of two members to fill the remaining two vacancies. The Secretary-General also informed the Assembly that the Government of the Philippines had nominated Ms. Pulido Tan to fill one vacancy in the Independent Audit Advisory Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2014 and that the Group of Asia-Pacific States had endorsed her candidature. He took it that the Committee wished to recommend the candidate's appointment by acclamation.

2. *It was so decided.*

3. *Ms. Pulido Tan (Philippines) was recommended for appointment to the Independent Audit Advisory Committee for a three-year term of office beginning on 1 January 2014.*

**Agenda item 133: Programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013** (*continued*)

*Second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013* (A/68/628 and A/68/656)

4. **Ms. Casar Perez** (Controller), introducing the second performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 (A/68/628), said that the report provided an estimate of the anticipated final level of expenditures, based on actual expenditures for the first 21 months of the biennium and projected requirements for the last three months. The estimates also took into account changes in budget assumptions for inflation and exchange rates and cost-of-living adjustments. The estimates reflected a net increase of $173.2 million, a figure that included increased requirements under the expenditure sections in connection with post-related deferred recosting, and unforeseen and extraordinary expenses incurred in accordance with resolution 66/249 and authorized commitments for the subvention to the Special Court for Sierra Leone and remediation work in the aftermath of storm Sandy. Those increased requirements were partially offset by a decrease under non-post resources and an increase in income. In accordance with resolution 67/246, whereby the General Assembly authorized the Secretary-General to utilize forward purchasing to protect the United Nations against exchange rate fluctuations, the report contained information on the experience of forward purchasing and related presentation practices.

5. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/68/656), said that, overall, the Advisory Committee recommended that the General Assembly should approve the revised estimates under the expenditure sections for the biennium 2012-2013 and the related income estimates. The Advisory Committee made observations on certain expenditure adjustments and stressed the need for clear and detailed information on the impact on resource requirements of travel-related measures mandated by successive General Assembly resolutions and on the ad hoc and unplanned associated costs related to the capital master plan. It agreed that the initial experience of forward purchasing appeared to have provided greater budgetary certainty and could potentially serve as an important tool for the Secretariat to better manage the budgetary implications of currency movements. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Assembly should request the Secretary-General to provide a more comprehensive assessment of forward purchasing in his first performance report on the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

6. **Mr. Thomson** (Fiji), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group had noted that the final level of expenditures under the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 amounted to $5, 603.7 million, with a net increase in expenditure of $173 million. Member States should act responsibly in approving the corresponding final appropriation and determining the necessary assessment to cover legitimate expenditures already incurred by the Organization, and should not undermine it by withholding approval for amounts

already committed for the implementation of approved mandates.

7. By its resolution 67/246, the General Assembly had decided to defer consideration of post-related recosting; that decision had been used to seek further cuts and, in conjunction with vacancy management practices, to justify leaving posts vacant in order to meet the illusory target of absorbing the costs related to recosting. The Group noted with concern that the practice had led to an increase in the average vacancy rate over the biennium 2012-2013, reversing the recent trend of declining vacancy rates. No post should be kept vacant in order to achieve budgetary savings. Such an approach not only undermined the implementation of mandated activities, but also subverted the Assembly's prerogatives in allocating resources and determining the staffing table.

8. The Organization's initial experience with forward purchasing had been positive; he looked forward to hearing how such legitimate approaches could be enhanced to make further efficiencies without negatively affecting the delivery of mandates. Lastly, he recalled that recosting was an integral part of the budget procedures established by General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211 and affirmed that the Group would reject any attempt to undermine the compromise that had been reached with regard to those procedures.

9. **Ms. Power** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that her delegation had expected the Secretariat to adhere as closely as possible to the agreed budget level of $5.395 billion. She had therefore been disappointed to see that the anticipated final level of expenditures under the programme budget for the biennium 2012-2013 was $5.603 billion, reflecting an increase of $204.3 million compared to the revised budget level. Despite having clearly outlined its expectations that the Secretary-General should deliver significant savings over the course of 2013, the Committee had been presented with a revised budget that barely differed from the inflated projection presented at the sixty-seventh session. The General Assembly's decision to defer consideration of post-related recosting did not imply a mere delay and there could be no assumption that further funding would be agreed.

10. Before taking any decisions, her delegation wanted to understand in detail the expenditures in a number of areas, including unforeseen and extraordinary expenses, particularly with regard to remediation work in the aftermath of storm Sandy; staff costs; travel costs; and furniture and equipment.

11. It was regrettable that the main driver of budget growth was once again recosting, in particular of staff-related costs. It had been expected that the Secretary-General would strive for new levels of efficiency, economy and transparency in the Organization's working methods and identify the scope for improvement. While the forward purchasing of foreign currency had partially aided budgetary predictability and had resulted in a saving of $3.5 million, an opportunity had been lost to address the total recosting bill and manage inflationary pressures. The report also illustrated the inadequacies of the common system, in that staff, insulated from the situation in the real world, continued to be awarded increases in remuneration that had pushed the net remuneration margin almost to the maximum limit and had driven the five-year average above the desirable mid-point.

12. Including recosting in the budget procedures had to stop in the interest of greater discipline, transparency and flexibility. It was imperative that Member States and the Secretariat should find a sounder budgetary basis for such costs. Her delegation had made initial proposals that could pave the way to ensuring greater budgetary predictability and identifying a truly sustainable way to manage those costs, moving away from the variable approach adopted by the Assembly in recent decades.

13. **Mr. Yamazaki** (Japan) said that the late issuance of documents had unduly extended the main session of the General Assembly, which had budgetary implications. He urged the Secretariat to ensure that documentation was submitted in a timely manner so that the Committee could finish its work as scheduled.

14. He recalled that in 2011 the General Assembly had adopted a budget for the biennium 2012-2013 that was about 5 per cent lower than the previous biennial budget, and that the Secretary-General had pledged to instruct all of his managers to continue finding new ways to make the most of the Organization's resources. Despite those pledges, it had become clear in 2012 that

there would be significant additional resource requirements and the Assembly had approved a revised budget of $5.396 billion. It was therefore regrettable that the final figure presented in the second performance report (A/68/628) not only exceeded the previous biennial budget by $187 million, but would be the largest budget in the Organization's history, despite the severe financial constraints faced by many of its Member States, including Japan. Consideration of recosting had been deferred in the expectation that the Secretariat would make further savings; instead, the Committee had been presented with a proposal for a substantial increase, risking a return to business as usual.

15. While some of the increase might be attributable to the approval of new mandates, the main driver was the recosting methodology, which was unique to the Organization. It was therefore imperative that Member States should explore ways of enabling the Organization to prioritize its activities, with commensurate staffing levels, so that emerging and urgent issues could be addressed and obsolete activities discontinued. Unlike most national governments, which were not allowed to exceed approved spending levels, managers within the Organization had come to expect that more resources would always be made available at the end of the budgetary cycle. Member States should work to correct those habits.

16. He would seek further clarification during the informal consultations regarding the appropriateness of some of the non-post resource requirements. He also wondered whether the Secretariat's vacancy management efforts had been sufficient, since the lower-than-budgeted actual vacancy rate appeared to have contributed to an increase of nearly $70 million in the budget. His delegation urged the Secretary-General not to allow unnecessary last-minute spending by any department or office.

17. In line with the Secretary-General's appeal to think and act innovatively and differently, and given that the United Nations was in uncharted territory, Member States might need to explore an unprecedented solution to balance the need to cover expenditures already incurred by the Organization against the need to take into account the financial constraints they were currently facing.

18. **Mr. Tommo Monthe** (Cameroon) said that the figures given in the second performance report (A/68/628) were only a partial evaluation of the 2012-2013 budget; the Committee would have to wait for the programme performance report for the biennium before a final assessment could be made of the programme budget. Given that more than $100 million of the total net increase could be attributed to changes in exchange and inflation rates, a difficult but pertinent question was what caused those two phenomena that, every year, put strain on and increased the budget. Should any delegation propose another viable means of addressing the issue of recosting and absorbing the costs of changes in inflation and exchange rates, the Committee would certainly consider it. In the meantime, the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211, including recosting, remained the best approaches that had been found to address those costs. While the Organization's requirements had exceeded budgetary appropriations during the current biennium, it should be borne in mind that that was not always the case, and that the main drivers of any increase were always inflation and exchange rate fluctuations.

19. With regard to unforeseen and extraordinary expenses, he noted that expenditure resulting from new mandates approved by Member States accounted for a small proportion of the budget increase, and that the contingency fund, which had been set up for that purpose, adequately met those requirements.

20. Despite the Secretary-General's many presentations on technological innovations that would allow certain activities to be carried out remotely without requiring staff to travel, a high number of business trips were still being taken. Moreover, as had been noted by the Advisory Committee, the Secretary-General had, once again, failed to provide information on the impact on resource requirements of travel-related measures mandated by successive General Assembly resolutions. He asked why that information had not been provided and what savings had been achieved as a result of those technological innovations.

21. **Ms. Power** (United States of America) said that the United States was proud of its role as the largest contributor to the United Nations regular budget and to the United Nations system. It wanted United Nations operations and programmes to succeed and was committed to the Organization's core mission of preserving international peace and stability. It was precisely for those reasons that her delegation wanted the Organization to operate as efficiently, effectively

and economically as possible. The United Nations must be put on a sound and sustainable fiscal path as a matter of urgency. While some steps had been taken to that end, the second performance report made it clear that progress needed to be faster, broader and deeper if the Organization was to rise to the challenges it faced. The additional $160 million sought by the Organization for recosting evinced a fundamental misunderstanding of the financial strain confronting taxpayers and governments around the world. There was a need for fundamental reform of the recosting methodology that had led budgets to balloon and made it impossible to plan responsibly. The Organization must be disciplined about its priorities; not only because of the financial pressures on its contributors, but also because of its moral obligations to the people who depended on it. When resources were squandered, they could not be used for more urgent purposes.

22. The Organization had taken some important steps to improve its relevance and performance. Over the previous two years, the Secretariat had operated within its budget allocation for special political missions and there had been welcome attempts to manage vacancies and preserve resources through the forward purchasing of currency and the introduction of the paper-smart concept, signs that the Organization was willing to abandon old habits and encourage entrepreneurial approaches. The proposed programme budget for 2014-2015, with a reduction in posts, had the potential to establish a more favourable budget trajectory for the Organization. However, more could and should be done. Given the current budget climate, promises of future change were simply not enough.

23. The General Assembly had approved the budget for the biennium 2012-2013 on the understanding that if some costs exceeded expectations, others would be reduced to keep overall spending at roughly the same level. That pledge had not been honoured. While Member States had been aware that some net cost increases might occur as a result of exchange rate fluctuations and unforeseen emergencies, they had expected such increases to be kept to an absolute minimum. A total of $200 million had already been approved by the Assembly for recosting, in addition to the funding for new mandates, including the special political missions in Yemen and the Sahel. The request before the Committee for an additional $160 million above and beyond the approved budget was not typical of how most businesses and organizations functioned.

24. Instead of being an envelope of available resources, the United Nations budget amounted to whatever expenditures had been made. The solution was not to keep asking the Committee for more money, but to balance unforeseen cost increases with selective cutbacks and improved management. There was an unfortunate tendency to act as if the increases were beyond the Organization's control and were the result of methodologies that were written in stone and could not be altered. However, those increases and methodologies were the product of choice, and what could be chosen could also be changed.

25. Her Government proposed that the additional $160 million should be accommodated without adding to the total budget for the biennium 2012-2013 or asking taxpayers to bear the extra burden. In order for the United Nations to enter a new era and put a firm cap on spending for the current biennium, the Secretariat and Member States must be willing to seek common ground and creative approaches, engage in dialogue and arrive at a decision based on consensus. Moreover, consensus could not be defined as a decision that did not command the support of the Organization's major contributors. Those people who depended on the United Nations were depending on the Committee to chart a new course for a renewed Organization.

26. **Ms. Goicochea** (Cuba), echoing the comments made by the representative of Japan with regard to the late issuance of documents, said that consideration of the second performance report should be carried out in accordance with the methodology established pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 42/211. Moving away from that methodology would hamper, rather than improve, the decision-making process. The agreements reached on recosting at the sixty-sixth and sixty-seventh sessions of the Assembly had hindered the recosting process and affected the Committee's current debate on the issue; consideration of recosting should not be deferred further. Any resolution that might be adopted on the matter should not be used to introduce changes to the recosting methodology, as that could taint the budgetary process and have a devastating impact on the functioning of the Secretariat. Her delegation was nevertheless prepared to consider proposals on the recosting methodology on a separate occasion.

27. The budgetary process did not take place in a vacuum; many of the Member States, including Cuba, were facing difficult economic situations. Despite

being a small, developing, island nation, and the difficulties resulting from the embargo, her country had always affirmed its commitment to the Organization and had always been willing to meet its obligations in accordance with its capacity to pay. While her delegation agreed, in principle, that the Organization should do more with less, that did not mean that services should be cut or mandates changed, and certainly not at the discretion of the Secretariat. Any changes should be decided by Member States to ensure that the Organization fulfilled its mandates efficiently. A number of proposals to modify the budget methodology, particularly with regard to prioritizing activities and managing vacancy rates, had been put forward. Member States should analyse those proposals in detail, but it should be borne in mind that the Secretariat could not address those issues without a decision by the Member States. Were the Secretariat to prioritize one activity over another, that would be a departure from the resolutions governing budgetary procedures.

28. Referring to paragraph 36 (b) of the Secretary-General's report (A/68/628), concerning the additional requirements incurred as a result of security staff working overtime, she asked whether the financial impact of the Committee's considerable delays in taking decisions had been calculated, since its meeting schedule inevitably required staff, including security personnel, to work longer hours.

29. Her delegation was also concerned at the reduction in the number, participants and duration of ad hoc expert group meetings funded under budget section 16, International drug control, crime and terrorism prevention and criminal justice, and the change in modality and funding due to availability of extrabudgetary resources. She wondered whether the Secretariat had decided, without consulting the Member States, to fund from extrabudgetary resources activities previously funded under the regular budget.

30. Lastly, she asked the Secretariat to explain, in the informal consultations, the decision to reduce temporary assistance for meetings in Geneva and to discontinue the translation of written replies to the lists of issues arising from the human rights treaty bodies. The Secretariat should comply in full with the decisions of Member States when implementing the budget, and must continue to operate within the existing recosting framework.

**Agenda item 134: Proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015** (*continued*)

*Estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council* (A/68/7/Add.10, A/68/7/Add.10/Corr.1, A/68/327, A/68/327/Add.1, A/68/327/Add.2, A/68/327/Add.3, A/68/327/Add.4, A/68/327/Add.5 and A/68/327/Add.6)

*Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.55/Rev.1: Situation of human rights in Myanmar* (A/68/7/Add.16; A/C.5/68/16)

31. **Ms. Casar** (Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's reports on estimates in respect of special political missions, good offices and other political initiatives authorized by the General Assembly and/or the Security Council (A/68/327, A/68/327/Add.1, A/68/327/Add.2, A/68/327/Add.3, A/68/327/Add.4, A/68/327/Add.5 and A/68/327/Add.6), said that they contained the proposed resource requirements for 34 special political missions. The budget proposals for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the Joint Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations for the Elimination of the Chemical Weapons Programme of the Syrian Arab Republic would be presented separately. The Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel and the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region were new missions that had not been included in the proposed funding envelope for special political missions for the biennium 2014-2015. Similarly, the requirements for the Office of the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria had been omitted when the proposed funding envelope was prepared, since it had been assumed that the mission would not continue into 2014-2015. Two other missions — the United Nations Political Office for Somalia (UNPOS) and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) — were being discontinued.

32. The budget proposals for special political missions for 2014 had once again been grouped into three thematic clusters — cluster I: special and personal envoys, and special advisers of the Secretary-General; cluster II: sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels; and cluster III: United Nations offices, peacebuilding support offices, integrated offices and

commission — and, in line with the request of the Advisory Committee, efforts had been made to provide additional information on resources for air operations; the evolution of vacancy rates; ratios for vehicles and computing equipment; the factors for variances in civilian personnel requirements; and the resources for experts, consultants and travel for each mission.

33. The total requirements for the 34 special political missions for 2014 amounted to $540.8 million. That amount comprised $520.3 million for the 31 continuing missions, which had been included in the proposed funding envelope, and $20.5 million for the three missions that had not been included. It was proposed that those requirements should be charged against the $1.081 billion provision for special political missions under section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015.

34. Introducing the statement of programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.55/Rev.1 on the situation of human rights in Myanmar (A/C.5/68/16), she said that, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, resources amounting to some $1.4 million would be required for 2014 for the continuation of the good offices efforts of the Secretary-General. Those requirements had been included in the Secretary-General's related report on estimates for special political missions for 2014 (A/68/327/Add.1).

35. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related reports of the Advisory Committee (A/68/7/Add.10, A/68/7/Add.10/Corr.1 and A/68/7/Add.16), said that the comments and recommendations of the Advisory Committee in respect of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.3/68/L.55/Rev.1 on the situation of human rights in Myanmar were contained in paragraphs 62 and 64 of its report on the matter (A/68/7/Add.16).

36. With regard to the Secretary-General's proposals for 34 of the 36 special political missions for 2014, the Advisory Committee's recommendations, set out in document A/68/7/Add.10, would entail a reduction of $4,273,200 in the proposed budgetary requirements. The Advisory Committee noted the efforts made to improve the presentation and content of the budget proposals and encouraged the Secretary-General to make further improvements in that regard. It also noted that, in response to its request, the Secretary-General had included information on the cooperation between the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support, and recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to further improve the cooperation and coordination between the three departments.

37. The Advisory Committee also recommended that the Assembly should request the Secretary-General to provide more comprehensive information on the benefits of the global field support strategy for special political missions in his next annual progress report on the support strategy. A related issue was the official launch of the Kuwait Joint Support Office in December 2012, which, according to the Secretary-General, had allowed for the integration of personnel and processes of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) into a single, consolidated entity. The Secretary-General had indicated in his latest overview report on peacekeeping operations (A/67/723) that, for the period 2013/14, he would focus on realizing the full integration and effectiveness of human resources and financial transactional processes transferred to the Regional Service Centre at Entebbe before proposing additional centres. In the Committee's view, the establishment of the Kuwait Support Office seemed to contradict that statement; it therefore recommended that the Secretary-General should be requested to provide full justification on that issue in the next overview report. The Advisory Committee also recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General to provide full costs and benefits of the Office in the budget proposals for special political missions for 2015.

38. The Advisory Committee recalled that UNAMI had previously been the only mission where the United Nations guard force had been deployed. It noted the planned deployment of the guard force in the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) by the end of 2013 and in UNSOM in 2014, and recommended that the General Assembly should request the Secretary-General, in the context of the budget proposals for 2015, to provide a comprehensive analysis of the deployment of guard forces at special political missions, including their modalities, criteria and support and backstopping

requirements, as well as differences and similarities to the deployment of troops to peacekeeping missions.

39. A biennial provision of $1,081 million for special political missions was included in section 3, Political affairs, of the proposed programme budget for 2014-2015, reflecting a reduction of $32 million in the amount of $1,113 million proposed for special political missions in the budget outline. According to the Secretary-General, of the 36 missions for 2014, requirements for 31 continuing missions had been taken into account in the biennial provision and those of five missions were considered new and additional. The proposed requirements for 2014 for 34 of the 36 special political missions amounted to $540.8 million, and the resource requirements for all 36 missions amounted to $603 million. As 2014 was the first year of the programme budget for the biennium 2014-2015, the overall resource requirements for special political missions — continuing or new — within and above the biennial provision of $1,081 million could only be determined in the second year. Any additional requirements above that provision would continue to be treated in accordance with annex I to General Assembly resolution 41/213.

40. With regard to official travel, a reduction of $2.5 million was proposed for 2014, reflecting the net effect of reduced requirements for 25 special political missions. The Advisory Committee had requested, but not received, a breakdown of travel costs showing the reduction resulting from the decrease in the number of trips, and the reductions and/or savings related to General Assembly resolutions 65/268, 67/254 and 67/248. The Advisory Committee regretted that the Secretary-General had been unable to provide the information it requested for a proper analysis of the resource requirements on travel for 2014. It was of the view that the implementation of the resolutions related to travel was likely to result in savings for some missions, while the Advisory Committee's recommendation on the standard of travel for experts under cluster II, if approved by the Assembly, might have an impact on the proposed resources for experts for 2014. The Advisory Committee recommended that the Assembly should request the Secretary-General to report variances in all travel-related expenditures in the performance reports for the biennium 2014-2015.

41. With regard to staffing requirements, a total of 3,845 staff were proposed for 2014 for the 34 missions, compared with 4,080 staff approved for 2013. The proposals reflected a net reduction of 235 positions for 34 of the 36 missions, with 241 positions proposed for reduction in UNAMA in addition to the reductions due to the closure of UNIPSIL, partially offset by the proposed establishment of 26 positions in the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes Region. Despite the proposed reduction in positions, an increase of $8.5 million under civilian personnel was projected. The justifications provided by the Secretary-General in his report (A/68/327) included increases in staff costs. The Advisory Committee had requested, but had not received, information on common staff costs for all missions. It requested that the information on common staff costs, including variances, should be provided in the budget proposals for special political missions for 2015.

42. Upon request, the Advisory Committee had been provided with information on the levels and types of contracts for the heads of all the special political missions. It had also been informed that three missions — the Special Adviser to the Secretary-General on Cyprus, the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel and the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great Lakes region — had heads at the Under-Secretary-General level, on when-actually-employed contracts, supported by Assistant Secretary-General-level positions.

43. Specific recommendations on resource requirements for the three thematic clusters, UNAMA and UNAMI were provided in chapter IV of the Advisory Committee's report (A/68/7/Add.10 and A/68/7/Add.10/Corr.1). For missions under cluster I, the Advisory Committee welcomed the decision to relocate the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Sahel to the region and to co-locate with the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for West Africa (UNOWA), which had been recommended by the Advisory Committee earlier. Taking into account the envisaged phasing out of the Special Envoy by the end of January 2014, the Advisory Committee recommended that the resources proposed for the position at the Under-Secretary-General level should be reduced accordingly and recommended approval of the proposed reclassification of the position for the Head of Office from D-2 to the Assistant Secretary-General level. The Advisory Committee also recommended approval of 21 of the 26 positions proposed for the Office of the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Great

Lakes Region, including one Under-Secretary-General and one Assistant Secretary-General. With regard to the Office of the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the proposed resources for 2014, except for the positions of two Government-provided personnel converted to the P-3 level, which the Advisory Committee considered should be funded under the regular budget instead of extrabudgetary resources in view of the continuing nature of their functions.

44. Turning to cluster II, he said that the Advisory Committee noted that the reduced requirements under travel for experts were attributable to the reduction in the number of trips to be undertaken by experts and to the change in the standards of accommodation for air travel for them, as a result of General Assembly resolution 67/254. The Advisory Committee noted that the Secretariat had classified the contractual status of the experts as "consultants"; taking into account the distinct nature of the work of the experts under the sanctions monitoring teams, groups and panels, it recommended that the Assembly should extend to the experts the exemptions referred to in paragraph 8 of the relevant report of the Secretary-General (A/66/676).

45. With regard to cluster III, the Advisory Committee noted that the provision for 2014 reflected a decrease of $8.67 million compared with the approved budget for 2013. The decrease was mainly the result of reduced requirements for UNIPSIL, owing to the full drawdown of the mission, and reduced operational requirements for the United Nations support for the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission, reflecting a change in the cost-sharing arrangement for a fixed-wing aircraft among the Commission and two other missions. The proposed staffing changes included 9 new positions, 35 abolishments, 3 reclassifications and 1 conversion. With a few exceptions, the Advisory Committee had no objection to the Secretary-General's staffing proposals. It did, however, question the rationale for proposing the abolishment of two regular budget positions in the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau, only to replace them with positions funded from extrabudgetary sources; in the Advisory Committee's view, that amounted to a substitution of funding source and not a saving.

46. The Advisory Committee reiterated that further steps needed to be taken to align the staffing structure of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya with that of similar missions.

47. With respect to UNAMA, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the Secretary-General's proposals. Noting the 2.5 per cent decrease in the proposed budget for 2014, the Advisory Committee recalled its previous recommendations on the impact of reductions on the UNAMA budget. The Secretary-General should take all necessary measures to ensure that there was no adverse impact on the quality and timeliness of the delivery of all mandated programmes and activities.

48. Turning to UNAMI, he said that, based on the actual vacancy rates for 2013, the Advisory Committee recommended that the Assembly should request the Secretary-General to adjust the resources for international positions based on a vacancy rate of 12 per cent in 2014. The Advisory Committee was of the view that a number of the staffing proposals for UNAMI were not sufficiently justified, and recommended that the Assembly should request the Secretary-General to undertake a comprehensive review of the Mission's staffing requirements, including the organizational structure and the number and level of senior positions, in the light of the evolution of the UNAMI mandate. It further recommended that the Assembly should request the Secretary-General to review the optimal deployment of resident auditors in UNAMI, and to report on both reviews in the context of the 2015 budget submission. Furthermore, the Advisory Committee did not support a number of proposed new positions in the mission support component, including a P-4 Administrative Officer, a P-3 Contracts Management Officer and a P-3 Administrative Officer, as it did not consider the requests sufficiently justified.

49. **Mr. Coffi** (Côte d'Ivoire), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Advisory Committee could not be blamed for taking time to consider the resource proposals, given their magnitude, and it was unacceptable that the Fifth Committee should have only five days to consider them. Recalling section I, paragraph 4, of General Assembly resolution 67/246, he called on the Secretary-General to establish a mechanism to hold accountable those responsible for the late issuance of documents and report thereon at the sixty-ninth session. A benchmark for late issuance of documents should be included in senior managers' compacts.

50. Special political missions played a vital role in conflict prevention, peacemaking and peacebuilding. The establishment of the United Nations Office to the African Union had led to more effective coordination of joint United Nations-African Union responses to issues of common interest. Given the breadth and complexity of the mandates of special political missions, strong financial support from Member States was critical to their effectiveness. The Group welcomed the efforts made by the Secretary-General to improve the presentation and content of his report, but concurred with the Advisory Committee that he should further improve the presentation and content of his budget proposals for special political missions by presenting comprehensive information related to cross-cutting issues in a format similar to that of the overview report on the financing of peacekeeping operations, in order to facilitate the consideration of the issues and decision-making by the General Assembly.

51. The quality and timely delivery of mandated programmes and activities must always be the overriding factor in determining the resource requirements and overall staffing structure for special political missions. The Group would therefore be seeking a number of clarifications on the proposed reductions in resources, particularly in the light of the increasingly complex mandates and activities given to special political missions, especially those operating in Africa. All peace missions should be adequately funded so as not to jeopardize the Organization's efforts to preserve peace, security and stability around the world.

52. Lastly, the Group had noted with concern the exponential increase in the financial requirements and complexity of special political missions over the previous decade. The financing and backstopping of those missions were unique, since they did not follow the regular budget cycle, despite being funded under that budget. To enhance the efficiency and transparency of the budgetary process, and taking into account the particularities surrounding the approval, functioning, scope and mandate of such missions, the Group supported the establishment of a funding mechanism, as recommended by the Advisory Committee in document A/66/7/Add.21, including a special and separate account that would be budgeted, funded and reported upon on an annual basis with a financial period of 1 July to 30 June.

53. **Ms. Karen Tan** (Singapore), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the number, size and complexity of special political missions had grown significantly in recent years. Some of the larger field missions had more in common with peacekeeping operations than traditional United Nations political missions. Costs had also escalated. In 2000-2001, $86 million had been appropriated for special political missions, while the proposed budget for such missions for 2014-2015 was $1.1 billion.

54. The Association supported the role special political missions played in conflict prevention and resolution, and peacebuilding, and deeply appreciated the sacrifices of their staff, many of whom worked in conflict or post-conflict zones. The missions often addressed challenges that others were unwilling or unable to deal with, and filled a gap in the maintenance of peace and security. Given their importance, the effective functioning of those missions should be a matter of priority for all Member States. A serious review of their funding and backstopping arrangements was needed, as it was increasingly evident that the current arrangements were inadequate. Although proposals to address the problem had been presented in 2011, the Committee had not yet taken any action, partly owing to the chronically late introduction of the budgets for special political missions. Should the Committee fail to reach a satisfactory outcome on the issue at the current session, the Association proposed that future consideration of the funding and backstopping arrangements should be delinked from the introduction of the budgets.

55. The main reason for the delay was, however, the lack of meaningful consideration by some delegations of the Advisory Committee's recommendations on the matter, particularly the creation of a separate account for the funding of special political missions. A separate account aligned with the peacekeeping budget cycle would benefit the missions, as the current biennial programme budget format was ill-suited to missions that could be established or expanded at any time. Synchronizing the budget cycles would facilitate the transition from peacekeeping operations to special political missions, or vice versa, and given that field-based special political missions were already planned and managed using peacekeeping models, alignment with that budget cycle was only logical. Such a step would also facilitate access for special political

missions to resources, such as the peacekeeping reserve fund, the peacekeeping support account and the strategic deployment stocks, that were currently available only to peacekeeping operations. The Committee should not authorize such access in a piecemeal manner while also rejecting the idea of a separate account; rather, it should consider interrelated proposals holistically and implement reforms as a whole so as to maximize their cumulative benefits.

56. The unequal influence among Member States over the creation of and mandate-setting for special political missions should be reflected in how they were funded. Of the current 38 special political missions, 34 had been established by the Security Council. The scale of assessments for peacekeeping operations reflected the special responsibilities of the permanent members of the Security Council, and the scale of assessments for special political missions should do the same. If those who held the most influence over the missions could not bear the costs, then serious consideration should be given to expanding the permanent membership of the Security Council in order to distribute responsibility and power more equitably. The general membership of the United Nations should not be unduly taxed if they were not adequately represented in the Council's decision-making process.

57. **Ms. Goicochea** (Cuba), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that the proposed appropriation of $1,081 million for special political missions for the biennium 2014-2015 represented 20 per cent of the regular budget. The financing of such missions distorted the regular budget and the current funding mechanisms adversely affected core programmes, the governance of special political missions, accountability and oversight by Member States. The arrangements for financing and backstopping special political missions should reflect the special responsibilities of the permanent members of the Security Council for maintaining international peace and security. A serious and transparent discussion of all those issues was needed.

58. CELAC was also concerned at the tendency to introduce the reports on special political missions late in the session, with negative consequences for deliberation and decision-making by the Member States.

59. **Mr. Quinn** (Canada), speaking also on behalf of Australia and New Zealand, said that special political missions helped to advance global peace and security by supporting elections, building national institutions and promoting human rights and the rule of law. They could also help monitor sanctions regimes and advance the agenda on women, security and peace. UNIPSIL, for example, had laid the foundation for sustainable progress in Sierra Leone. The successful implementation of the UNIPSIL mandate and the careful approach to transition planning as the mission prepared to withdraw at the end of March 2014, offered valuable lessons that could be applied to other special political missions.

60. The three delegations for which he spoke welcomed the $32 million reduction in resources proposed for special political missions for 2014-2015 compared to the budget outline. It was crucial that the reduction should be made without impeding the fulfilment of mandates. Care must be taken to ensure that the structure, staffing levels and resources of those missions were tailored to their real requirements. His delegation would follow closely the work of the new missions to be established in the Sahel, Somalia and the Great Lakes Region. Fiscal discipline should be an ongoing process and the Secretariat should find innovative ways to carry out the mandates of special political missions.

61. UNAMA played a central role in coordinating international action and assistance to support the Government of Afghanistan in advancing political and economic development and strengthening security. He noted with concern that the Mission's child protection and gender functions had been merged into the Human Rights Unit; while that approach might have operational and financial benefits, it risked sidelining those matters within the Mission. He wished to have assurances that direct reporting lines to senior Mission leadership would be reinforced and that the capacity to undertake mandated tasks on child protection and gender equality would be maintained.

62. Flexibility was a key element in making special political missions a useful tool in advancing peace and security. The Secretary-General's recommendations on providing such missions with access to appropriate support structures were therefore particularly welcome, as they afforded an opportunity to achieve practical operational benefits as well as financial efficiencies.

63. **Mr. Presutti** (Observer for the European Union), speaking also on behalf of the candidate countries Iceland, Montenegro, Serbia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and, in addition, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, said that, given the importance of special political missions in preventing, controlling and resolving conflicts and in post-conflict peacebuilding, it was regrettable that the related item had been introduced so late in the session. Because the financing of such missions accounted for a significant part of the Organization's regular budget, he welcomed the Secretariat's efforts to ensure more realistic forecasting and to manage the budgets of those missions more effectively and efficiently; although the proposals for 2014-2015 were still indicative, they represented a $130 million reduction compared to the expected overall figure for the financing of special political missions in 2012-2013.

64. Effective and efficient support arrangements for special political missions were important; a positive response to the Secretary-General's longstanding concerns relating to the funding of the start-up, expansion and backstopping of missions was long overdue. Given the limited time available, Member States should focus on achieving solutions that would improve the operational effectiveness of such missions.

65. **Ms. Colín** Ortega (Mexico) said that, over the previous two decades, special political missions had proven to be one of the most innovative tools available to the Security Council and the General Assembly to address challenges in the maintenance of peace and security. She reiterated her Government's support for those missions and the staff who served in them, often in less than ideal conditions. However, as her delegation had pointed out in the past, a number of challenges in the financing of such missions required urgent attention. Foremost among them was the distortion of the regular budget caused by the large share of resources devoted to such missions and the resulting impact on the other substantive work of the United Nations, particularly in the area of development. Second, the disorderly growth of those missions had led to inadequate clarity and oversight in respect of the backstopping provided by the Secretariat. Moreover, the Assembly had not received sufficient information to properly analyse their needs.

66. The financing of special political missions within the regular budget cycle hampered their speedy deployment in response to urgent situations. The Secretariat did not have the necessary mechanisms to provide human and financial resources with the agility demanded by the situations on the ground. Her delegation would support the Advisory Committee's recommendations on the need to include all support services in the performance reports for special political missions and to ensure better coordination among the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support. Lastly, considering that the vast majority of such missions were established by the Security Council, the Council members should assume the greatest share of responsibility for their financing, just as they did for peacekeeping missions.

67. In order to strengthen special political missions as a tool in preventing the escalation of conflicts and achieving settlement of political disputes, the Committee should engage in a comprehensive discussion to ensure proper arrangements for the administration, financing and oversight of such missions. The Secretary-General's reports should provide more information on such matters as human resources, support from Headquarters, mandate implementation and cross-cutting issues. Better reporting could be achieved by aligning the budgetary cycle of such missions with that of peacekeeping missions. In order to find a long-term solution for the proper financing of such missions, the Assembly should consider establishing a special account financed under a scale of assessments similar to that for peacekeeping missions.

68. **Mr. Al-Dabag** (Iraq) said that the Secretary-General's reports on the financing of special political missions should be introduced early enough in the session to enable the Committee to consider them properly.

69. Underscoring the importance of the Organization's ongoing role in Iraq, he reiterated his Government's commitment to providing UNAMI with the best possible support so as to enable the Mission to shoulder its responsibilities under the mandate approved by the Security Council.

70. **Ms. Moreno Guerra** (Cuba) said that, even with a 2-per-cent reduction in the proposed resources for special political missions, those resources would still

represent some 20 per cent of the regular budget, resulting in a profound inequity in the allocation of resources among the priorities set by the Assembly. That was a matter of particular concern, considering that a large number of States were facing difficulties in achieving their development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

71. Her delegation remained concerned at the lack of specific mandates for some special political missions. An exchange of letters between the Secretary-General and the Security Council was an insufficient legislative basis for their establishment, particularly in view of the sensitive nature of their goals. The fact that some of their activities had no explicit mandate undermined the prerogatives of the Assembly and the intergovernmental process. Unlike for peacekeeping missions, the current procedure for approving and monitoring special political missions prevented the Assembly from performing proper oversight.

72. It was unfortunate, given the large volume of resources involved, that the item was once again being taken up late in the session, with negative consequences for the Committee's decision-making process. She wished to hear from the Chair of the Advisory Committee why the Committee's report had been issued so late.

73. With respect to the proposed resources for the Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, set out in document A/68/327/Add.1, her Government supported the functions of the Special Adviser but remained firmly opposed to including the responsibility to protect in the related strategic framework, activities and results when there was no intergovernmental agreement on the matter. The inclusion of that issue was a violation of the regulations governing programme planning and the programme budget and related Assembly resolutions. It was a matter of great concern that the level of resources allocated to the responsibility to protect had not been specified in the report; she requested the circulation of a conference room paper containing detailed information on those resources.

74. It was also unacceptable that the Special Adviser was charged with further developing and refining the concept of responsibility to protect, a function that was strictly within the purview of the General Assembly. Moreover, there was no legal basis for developing a methodology for the implementation of mandates related to the responsibility to protect, as the Assembly, in its resolution 63/308, had decided to continue considering the concept. The Secretary-General's report ignored the terms of the 2005 World Summit Outcome, according to which the Assembly would continue to study the question, taking into account the Charter and international law, which meant that the Assembly must reach agreement on the scope and implications of the concept before it could be the object of any mandate. The current proposal undermined the intergovernmental process and was therefore unacceptable.

75. **Mr. Ono** (Japan) said that, while his delegation supported the respective mandates of each special political mission, it had noted that, taking into account the resources for UNSOM and the OPCW-United Nations Joint Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, the total proposed budget allocation for special political missions for 2014 amounted to $603,089,900, an increase of around $12 million compared to the approved resources for 2013. Overall resources for special political missions for 2014-2015 must not exceed the total of $1,081 million set out in the appropriate section of the proposed programme budget; to that end, his delegation would seek further efficiencies in resource utilization for those missions. The Advisory Committee's recommendations would be a good starting point for the deliberations on the item.

76. The fiscal constraints faced by Member States meant that limited resources were available to respond to challenges in the area of peace and security. The most effective approach was therefore to make the best use of comparative advantages by seeking the correct balance of United Nations responses, including special political missions and peacekeeping missions. Ensuring timely and smooth transitions between different types of missions would also enhance the efficient use of resources.

77. Greater transparency was needed to keep Member States which were not Security Council members better informed about the process of establishing special political missions and about their activities. There should also be enhanced accountability that included clear mandates, sound operations and well-defined timelines for mission activities. Such transparency would contribute to better understanding of budget proposals when Member States were asked for increased resources for those activities.

78. **Mr. Patriota** (Brazil) said that special political missions played a crucial role in preventing conflict and supporting countries in post-conflict situations. However, owing to the biennial structure of the regular budget, the financing and backstopping arrangements for such missions no longer adequately supported the implementation of their mandates and led to lack of transparency and inefficiency in mission management. Moreover, the resulting distortion in the regular budget restricted the Organization's capacity to carry out mandates in other areas, thus disrupting the effective functioning of the entire system and exacerbating tensions during the Committee's budget discussions. The issue must be urgently addressed by separating the financing of special political missions from the regular budget and giving them access to the backstopping resources and capabilities provided to peacekeeping operations.

79. Member States had a responsibility to provide the United Nations with the means of maintaining international peace and security while also addressing a structural flaw in the budgetary process. There was also an issue of democratic governance: while Security Council members took decisions on special political missions, those missions were financed under the regular budget and thus encroached on the resources available for the fulfilment of other mandates, particularly under the development pillar. Delegations that had expressed concerns regarding the recosting procedure should be even more concerned about the matter at hand, as the funding for special political missions exceeded the budgeted amount each year and was adjusted ex post facto.

80. **Mr. Ayzouki** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that his delegation welcomed the appointment of the Joint Special Representative of the United Nations and the League of Arab States for Syria and wished him success in his mandate to seek a political solution to the Syrian crisis. His Government had indicated that it would take part, without preconditions, in the second Geneva Conference on Syria, the aim of which was to find a solution that would lead to the building of a Syria for the future, with the participation of Syrians themselves and with no outside interference.

81. Such a political solution required international support and efforts to fight terrorism in Syria and to establish peace and stability in the country. States that were supporting terrorism in Syria must stop financing and training terrorists, put an end to the provocations and sectarian violence, withdraw their mercenaries recruited from around the world and end their destructive practice aimed at preventing the holding of the Geneva Conference and the achievement of a political solution to the crisis. His Government would take legal measures to hold accountable those Governments that had financed terrorism by insisting that they paid damages for all the harm suffered by the country and the Syrian people as a result.

82. His delegation had already expressed reservations about the Secretary-General's reports on Syria, owing to their unsound basis, and about the Security Council's decisions, which lacked objectivity. His Government would cooperate with the Joint Special Representative with a view to bringing about a political solution to the crisis; to that end, his delegation supported the approval of the related budget proposal.

83. **Mr. Tommo Monthe** (Cameroon) said that United Nations support for the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission was included in cluster III of the special political missions. The Commission, whose mandate was to facilitate the implementation of the ruling of the International Court of Justice on the boundary dispute between the two countries, had made a series of tangible achievements — including significant confidence-building measures — that were detailed in the related report of the Secretary-General (A/68/327/Add.3). His delegation expressed its gratitude to the Secretary-General for his efforts in that regard and to those Governments that had provided voluntary contributions and other support for the Commission's endeavours. Owing to its success, the Commission merited further support and indeed might serve as a worthy example for the settlement of similar disputes in other regions. He expressed the hope that the Committee would ensure that it received adequate funding.

84. **Mr. Dadu** (Nigeria) said that his delegation shared the sentiments expressed by the representative of Cameroon concerning United Nations support for the Cameroon-Nigeria Mixed Commission.

85. With respect to the regular budget as a whole, one point that was frequently missed during the debate was that all Member States were facing the challenge of limited resources and it was contradictory for delegations to call for reductions in the United Nations budget at a time when national programmes were being reduced owing to austerity measures. Working for

peace and security and ensuring the well-being of the people in the States affected were two sides of the same coin and adjustments on one side necessarily affected the other. Member States should properly justify their proposed adjustments to the Secretary-General's proposals for the programme budget and decisions on the matter should be taken following due deliberation.

**Agenda item 158: Financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali** (A/68/538 and A/68/653)

86. **Ms. Casar** (Controller), introducing the Secretary-General's report on the budget for the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) for the period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014 (A/68/538), said that the proposed budget had been prepared on the basis of the revised standardized funding model, taking into account lessons learned. The proposed resources of $609.5 million for the maintenance of the Mission reflected deployment and resource utilization patterns for previous start-up missions in the first year of operations and were limited to what could be realistically achieved during the period. The proposed budget included provisions to support the deployment of up to 9,250 military, 1,168 police and 987 civilian personnel; in addition, $6.2 million was provided for 22 temporary positions to provide backstopping capacity at Headquarters and 6 temporary positions for the Resident Audit Office to be established in Mali.

87. For the period from 25 April to 30 June 2013, expenditure of $82.0 million, mainly for the acquisition of Mission assets and equipment, had been incurred against the commitment authority of $83.7 million.

88. **Mr. Ruiz Massieu** (Chair of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions), introducing the related report of the Advisory Committee (A/68/653), said that the Advisory Committee recommended the appropriation of $608,548,200 for the maintenance of the Mission for the 12-month period from 1 July 2013 to 30 June 2014, inclusive of the amount of $366,774,500 previously authorized by the Assembly in its resolution 67/286.

89. Under civilian staffing, the Advisory Committee recommended reductions of one P 5, seven P-4, four P-3 and three National Professional Officer posts. Except for operational costs related to the post reductions, the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the requested resources, considering that the Mission was in its start-up phase. It also recommended approval of the requested resources under the support account for peacekeeping operations for 2013/14, taking into consideration General Assembly resolution 67/286, although it recommended that future such requests should be made under the annual support account proposal.

90. On the revised standardized funding model, the Advisory Committee considered that the Secretary-General should analyse actual expenditures and lessons learned in order to ensure a more accurate and timely budget proposal that was in line with actual performance. The Advisory Committee would review the issue in the context of the global field support strategy and the Missions' performance report.

91. **Mr. Coffi** (Côte d'Ivoire), speaking on behalf of the Group of African States, said that the Group's concern at a new trend of attacks against United Nations peacekeepers had recently increased following the killing of two Senegalese peacekeepers in a car bomb blast in Mali. He extended condolences to the families of those peacekeepers and wishes for the speedy recovery of the injured. The attack had occurred just prior to elections that were part of the process of restoring democracy in Mali, a process to which the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States were contributing.

92. The Group would be interested in having further detail about how the standardized funding model had been used to derive the elements of the budget proposal for MINUSMA. It would also like to know to what extent the revised model addressed the challenges of Mission start-up. It was important to provide peacekeeping missions with adequate resources to fulfil their mandates. His delegation would scrutinize the reductions proposed by the Advisory Committee in order to avoid any adverse impact on the Mission's operations, which were currently in a critical phase. Taking into account all of its concerns, the Group supported the Secretary-General's proposed budget for the 2013/14 period.

93. **Mr. Doucouré** (Mali) said that the mandate of MINUSMA, one of the largest United Nations integrated multidimensional missions, encompassed the stabilization of large population centres and restoration

of the rule of law; support for national dialogue and elections; the protection of civilians and United Nations personnel; the promotion and defence of human rights; support for humanitarian action and safeguarding the cultural heritage; and action in favour of national and international justice. Since its establishment in July 2013, the Mission had contributed greatly to stabilizing the country, particularly by supporting a successful electoral process. Despite that success, the security situation remained a source of concern. The terrorist attacks in Mali, the most recent of which had occurred on 14 December 2013, underscored the need for MINUSMA to have adequate operational capacities. He paid tribute to the memory of the victims and expressed wishes for the speedy recovery of the injured.

94. The Secretary-General's report on the financing of the Mission offered an opportunity to correct its logistical and personnel shortcomings. He noted that the Advisory Committee recommended approval of the resources requested for military and police personnel and under the four components of the Mission's mandate. Resources for activities related to national reconciliation and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants were particularly important.

95. In concluding, he commended the United Nations peacekeepers who risked their lives every day to bring peace and security to Mali and to the whole world.

*The meeting rose at 12.55 p.m.*